

with regard  
Thieu's concerns  
about military  
and economic issues

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1971 JUL 4 13 13

TOP SECRET SENSITIVE

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FROM: HENRY A. KISSINGER, SAIGON 0684  
TO: THE WHITE HOUSE, EXCLUSIVELY EYES ONLY GENERAL HAIG  
SUBJECT: JULY 4 MEETING WITH THIEU

TOSIT 5

1. AMBASSADOR BUNKER AND I HAD A VERY PRODUCTIVE ONE HOUR FORTY-FIVE MINUTE MEETING WITH THIEU TODAY. I REAFFIRMED THE STRONG SUPPORT OF THE UNITED STATES AND THE PRESIDENT PERSONALLY OUTLINED OUR PLANS IN AREAS OF MAJOR CONCERN TO THIEU, AND DESCRIBED THE PRESENT STATE OF PLAY IN PARIS. HE EXPLAINED PROBABLE ENEMY PLANS, HOW HE WOULD MEET THEM, AND WHAT HE NEEDED FROM US. WHILE BEING CANDID ABOUT THE PRESSURES ON THE AMERICAN HOME FRONT, I REASSURED THIEU THAT OUR TWO COUNTRIES HAD NOT GONE THROUGH SO MANY YEARS OF SUFFERING IN ORDER TO LOSE NOW. I TOLD HIM TO LET US KNOW WHAT HE THINKS HE NEEDS TO SUCCEED AND THE PRESIDENT WOULD DO WHATEVER HE CAN WITHIN A REASONABLE FRAMEWORK.

MORI C03362005

State Dept. review completed

2. ON THIEU'S THREE MAJOR CONCERNS, I TOLD HIM AS FOLLOWS:  
A. AIR SUPPORT: ALTHOUGH NOT YET OFFICIAL, WE WOULD ALMOST CERTAINLY APPROVE ABRAMS' RECOMMENDATION OF 10,000 TACTICAL AND 1000 B-52 SORTIES THROUGH 1972. IF HE PREFERRED, WE WOULD PROVIDE 9,000 TACTICAL SORTIES WITH SURGE TO 12,000. HE SAID THAT GENERAL ABRAMS' PROPOSAL FOR THE FORMER WAS PROBABLY CORRECT.

B. RVNAF: I SAID THAT WE WERE PREPARED TO GIVE SUPPORT FOR MANNING LEVELS OF 90 PERCENT UP TO THE 1.1 MILLION CEILING. IF NECESSARY TO PROTECT MR1 WE WOULD SUPPORT REDEPLOYMENTS OR RATHER REPLACING UNITS IN MR3 AND 4 WITH NEW UNITS IN MR1 WITHIN THAT CEILING. ALTERNATIVELY WE WERE PREPARED TO SUPPORT AN ADDITIONAL 50,000 MEN FOR MR1. HE SHOULD CONVEY HIS PREFERENCE OFFICIALLY THROUGH BUNKER. IN RESPONSE TO HIS EMPHASIS ON MOBILITY AND FIRE SUPPORT, I SAID WE WOULD TRY TO KEEP THE MAXIMUM NUMBER OF HELICOPTER COMPANIES AND REDEPLOY THEM LAST AND THAT WE WOULD LOOK INTO ARTILLERY. I MENTIONED IMPORTANCE OF GOOD LEADERSHIP AND THIEU NOTED LACK OF QUALIFIED LEADERS IN FAST-GROWN ARMY.

ARMY & USAF review(s) completed.

C. ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE: I SAID THAT PRESIDENT NIXON WAS PREPARED TO PROVIDE LONG-RANGE ASSISTANCE, WITH NATURE AND AMOUNT TO BE WORKED OUT BY TECHNICIANS AND SOUTH VIETNAMESE REFORMS A KEY INGREDIENT.

3. U.S. TROOP LEVELS. IN RESPONSE TO HIS QUESTION, I TOLD HIM THAT WE HAD NO PLANS YET FOR THE NEXT WITHDRAWAL ANNOUNCEMENT AND WOULD NOT ACCELERATE PULLOUTS BEFORE THEN NO MATTER WHAT SPECULATION HE HAD HEARD. I ADDED THAT, AS HE KNEW, WE WOULD HAVE TO MAKE SOME PRETTY DRASTIC MOVES AFTER DECEMBER 1. HE COMMENTED THAT BELOW A CERTAIN LEVEL THE EXACT NUMBER OF AMERICAN FORCES MEANT LITTLE IN COMBAT TERMS BUT EMPHASIZED HIS NEED FOR STRONG LOGISTIC SUPPORT, ESPECIALLY HELICOPTERS AND AIR, TO COMPENSATE. AS FOR CONTINUING AMERICAN PRESENCE, I TOLD HIM THAT FOR US PROVIDING ADVISERS/TECHNICIANS WAS THE EASIEST; THEN AIR SUPPORT, ESPECIALLY ON CARRIERS AND IN THAILAND BUT ALSO TO SOME EXTENT IN VIETNAM; LOGISTIC TROOPS IN ORGANIZED UNITS WOULD BE MORE DIFFICULT BUT SHOULD BE POSSIBLE THE BETTER PART OF 1972; AND INFANTRY UNITS WERE THE HARDEST OF ALL. IN RESPONSE TO HIS QUERY, I SAID THAT I THOUGHT THAT U.S. WOULD CONTINUE TO PLAY A LONG-TERM ROLE IN SOUTHEAST ASIA.

4. MILITARY SITUATION. HE THOUGHT 1971 WAS SAFE, THANKS IN PART TO LAM SON 719 AND CAMBODIAN OPERATIONS; THAT ENEMY WOULD BUILD UP FORCE IN NEXT DRY SEASON FOR AN OFFENSIVE IN MR1 DESIGNED TO INFLUENCE AMERICAN POLITICS; THAT REAL TEST WOULD THEN COME IN LATE 1972-1973 WHEN IT WOULD ESSENTIALLY BE AN ALL-VIETNAMESE SHOW; AND THAT IF ENEMY STILL NOT SUCCESSFUL, THEY MIGHT NEGOTIATE OR FADE AWAY, BIDDING TIME OUT OF VIETNAMESE TACTICAL REACH IN LAOS AND CAMBODIA. HE EXPRESSED CONFIDENCE RVNAF COULD HANDLE SITUATION; PLANS MAJOR OFFENSIVE INTO CAMBODIA AROUND THIS NOVEMBER TO DISRUPT ENEMY PLANS; WILL THEN REINFORCE MR1 WITH AIRBORNE AND MARINES FOR EXPECTED ENEMY ASSAULT IN EARLY 1972; AND WILL PHASE OUT 9TH DIVISION FROM DELTA AND USE IT AS GENERAL RESERVE FOR MR3 AND CAMBODIA. HE WILL ALSO USE SPARES FROM AN MR3 DIVISION FOR RECRUITMENT IN MR1.

5. PARIS NEGOTIATIONS. I FILLED THIEU IN ON ALL THE DEVELOPMENTS IN PARIS. I NOTED SIMILARITY BETWEEN ENEMY'S PUBLIC AND PRIVATE PROPOSALS, POSSIBLE MOVEMENT ON POLITICAL QUESTION, AND THEIR WILLINGNESS TO BARGAIN FOR FIRST TIME. I ASSURED HIM THAT WE WOULD NEVER AGREE TO ENEMY'S POLITICAL DEMANDS. I NEVER TALK TO

MATTER WHAT SPECULATION HE HAD HEARD. I ADDED THAT, AS THE RULE, WE WOULD 1. No Objection to Declassification in Full 2010/08/30 : LOC-HAK-504-5-9-7  
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6. ELECTIONS: THIEU SAID THEY WOULD BE WELL ORGANIZED AND FAIR; THAT HIS ELECTION LAW WAS NOT AIMED AT MINH AND KY, WHO HAD SUFFICIENT SUPPORT, BUT RATHER TO GIVE NEXT PRESIDENT REAL MANDATE; THAT HE WELCOMES FOREIGN OBSERVERS AND WAS ESTABLISHING AN INTER-MINISTERIAL COMMITTEE TO ASSIST THEM; AND THAT HE HOPED TWO-PARTY SYSTEM WOULD EVOLVE BY 1975 ELECTIONS.

7. ROK TROOPS. THIEU SAID PARK HAD JUST ASSURED HIM THAT THE TWO ROK DIVISIONS WOULD REMAIN, ALTHOUGH THE 10,000 MARINES WOULD HAVE TO GO BETWEEN DECEMBER 1971 AND JUNE 1972 BECAUSE OF ELECTION PROMISE. WE AGREED THIS WAS GOOD NEWS AND THAT WE WOULD SUPPORT THEIR STAYING WITH PARK AT LEAST THROUGH 1972.

8. DRUGS. I EMPHASIZED SERIOUSNESS OF DRUG PROBLEM WHICH BY ITSELF COULD FORCE US ON WITHDRAWALS.

9. COMMENT: I THINK THE PERSONAL REASSURANCE I CONVEYED FROM THE WHITE HOUSE CAME AT A VERY OPPORTUNE TIME FOR THIEU, GIVEN OUR DOMESTIC SCENE AND THE NEW PRG PROPOSAL IN PARIS. THIEU PROJECTED A QUIET CONFIDENCE THAT HIS COUNTRY CAN STAND ON ITS OWN OVER THE COMING YEARS, PROVIDING IT GETS THE NECESSARY AIR POWER, LOGISTIC AND FINANCIAL SUPPORT DURING THE NEXT CRUCIAL ONE AND ONE-HALF - TWO YEARS.

10. PLEASE INFORM THE PRESIDENT ABOUT THIS MEETING. AMBASSADOR BUNKER IS ALSO SENDING IN A REPORT THROUGH STATE CHANNELS.

EDJ:9:3(17).

**TOP SECRET SENSITIVE**